

Pete Hamel
9 Shepherds Close
London N6 5AG

FAO: Nathan Keyte
Planning Services, Haringey Council,
River Park House, 225 High Road,
London N22 8HQ

26 February 2024

RE: Planning application HGY/2023/3217

Site location: Land to west of 27 Shepherds Close, London N6 5AG

Dear Nathan Keyte,

I am writing to comment on the above planning application. In summary I am strongly against the planning application. I will list my reasons why I think building on this land would be contrary to planning guidelines and also would also be to the detriment of local residents and the environment.

For reference, we live at number 9, opposite the site, and will look directly onto the proposed development.

1. It should be noted that development on this same site has been refused many times over the years since 1979. Although every planning application needs to be considered individually it is the case that there is a common theme for all of the previous refusals and this latest application does nothing to address that.

The previous refusal reasons are all related to the loss of important green space that is currently of positive benefit to the Close. Its loss and replacement with another house would not enhance the Conservation Area that the Close is part of. Any building that would take place, regardless of its design, will still result in the losses above as well as an increasing urbanisation of this area.

The above is a recurring theme of why any building on this piece of land, no matter what its design was, would be detrimental to the amenity of the Close and the environment. It would also call into question all the previous refusals and set a precedent that previous refusals at other sites based on similar reasons could be overturned by repeated applications. If a refusal occurs for specific reasons based on the site and not the building design, those reasons should continue to stand and not be called into question. For further detail on these reasons, please refer to the planning applications and appeals, all refused, listed below.

OLD/1979/1258
OLD/1979/1259
HGY/1990/1531
HGY/1997/0122
HGY/2002/0158
APP/Y5420/A/02/1108911 -
HGY/2011/0596
HGY/2011/1860
HGY/2019/3260
APP/Y5420/W/20/3257208

There are also a number of other specific reasons why this particular development is unsuitable and unsatisfactory for this site.

2. This particular plot of land has always been garden space, originally as part of 27 Shepherds Close. Planning guidelines specify a presumption against development on garden space. Small green areas such as this should be carefully guarded and not be at risk of repeated planning applications in the hope that eventually the planning team gives in.

3. This site currently acts a valuable green corridor between the Parkland Walk and Shepherds Close. Removing it by building on it would be detrimental the flora and fauna in addition to the wellbeing of the Close occupants.

4. The original design of housing on the close by the architect Harley Sherlock was such that although relatively tightly built, due to their arrangement, all of the houses avoided excessive overlooking from each other. There was a reason why this plot of land was originally not built on and to now build on it would be against the original ethos of the design of the Close. Certainly, if this house was built it would be directly overlooked by our house, number 9, as well as 10,11, 27 and 26. Its front windows would look directly into our house, and 10 and 11 also.

5. The height of the proposed building continues the level of the existing garage roof height. This is already very high in relation to the ground next to it. Being presented with a building at this same height when viewed from our house, and 10 and 11, will be hugely detrimental to our environment. It will appear overbearing and will replace our green view with a mass of brick and windows and restrict our view of the Parkland Walk.

6. Currently there is a well used public footpath that runs between the garage blocks past the proposed development into the Close. This is used by many residents of the Close when walking up to Archway Road and back again. The visualisation images do not show how the footpath will be changed for the worse if the development occurs. Walking down the steps towards the proposed new house, there would be directly in front of you a high brick wall blocking out a large amount of light. This is not there currently. This would create the feeling of a dark unsafe corner for any vulnerable person, totally altering the character of this walking route.

7. Although there is no question that there is a requirement for more housing in Haringey, this development will do nothing to alleviate that problem. The lack of housing is for affordable housing and not £1m+ houses of which there is no shortage.

8. There is also a serious concern over infrastructure problems in Shepherds Close. For a long time there have been issues with drainage and sewage in the Close. It appears that they both operate at full capacity most of the time. This has resulted in some properties lower in the Close having serious problems with overflowing of waste water. Adding another property onto the existing drainage and sewer network will be certain to worsen the existing problems. Note that the energy statement for the application states there is no history of flooding at the site. This is incorrect. There is a history of flooding problems at Shepherds Close.

9. Although not strictly a planning concern, the matter of trees and their removal is specifically mentioned several times in the Final Planning Statement document. The developer cut down 19 mature conifer trees in January 2020. There is an open question over whether the correct Section 211 procedure was adhered to despite what it says in the document. In any case, the Section 211 requirements are that any trees removed must be replaced. At this point, 4 years later, there is no sign of 19 trees having been planted. Also, in the Final Planning Statement document it describes the site as previously "benefitting from tall mature evergreen tree" but then contrasts that with current site "devoid of trees with high boarded fencing". It then refers to a fictitious dumping problem. Local residents can all confirm there is not and has never been a dumping problem on the site or any of the other anti social behaviour that is also referred to elsewhere in the document. The whole episode seems to be a cynical attempt to make the site more development friendly and to sway the views of those responsible for assessing this application. This view is further confirmed in Section 3.5 – 3.9 of the Final Planning Statement. The premise seems to be that since the trees have been cut down, the site has been permanently disfigured and urbanised, and hence development is now the only option. However, it is the case that once the gravel and weed control measures are removed again, nature would quickly re-establish itself in recreating a green vista that would again benefit residents as well as the natural environment. Ultimately local residents want the site returned to use as a garden that all can enjoy in perpetuity.

10. There is a concern about the site dimensions and borders and whether they are correctly specified in relation to the footpath at the front of the site. The concern is that the site plans indicate the site borders may be encroaching onto the width of the footpath reducing it's width. Any reduction of footpath width for any reason will cause problems for this with restricted mobility and wheelchair users and should always be avoided.

11. We own one of the garages that the proposed house would join onto. We are very concerned about how this would work. The garages suffer from severe damp problems and if the end wall is built up against, the brickwork will not be able to breathe and dry out. Conversely, if a gap is left in between the garage wall and the proposed new house, it would have to be very narrow to avoid losing floor area. This very narrow gap that would be impossible to clean and clear and so would fill up with debris and be impossible to maintain. This is obviously far from ideal also.

To summarise again, for the reasons listed above, I believe this planning application should be refused.

Yours sincerely,

Pete Hamel